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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2401

Feb. 24, 1989

BRUSSELS TRADE MEETING -- A March 10 & 11 meeting in Brussels between U.S. and European Community adversaries may break the deadlocked talks over agricultural trade reform. Trade Ambassador Carla Hills and Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter are expected to represent the U.S. They have previously called on other nations to "ratchet down" the size of their farm subsidies in coming years.

PLASTIC GARBAGE BAGS -- The Chicago Park District and the city of Chicago recently announced plans to begin using degradable plastic garbage bags. The bags are 94 percent synthetic polymers and 6 percent cornstarch. The bags will be tested under regular conditions as garbage can liners and distributed to community groups during local park cleaning efforts. The National Corn Growers were passing out samples of their corn-based bags at the last NAFB meeting in Kansas City. Contact: Steve Wentworth (217) 875-3076.

WHEAT STOCKS LOWEST IN 14 YEARS -- The U.S. wheat stockpile will be down to one of the smallest inventories since the end of World War II, USDA says. In the Wheat Outlook & Situation Summary, USDA said part of the reduction is due to drought and also is a direct result of efforts to restrain production and encourage use to reduce excessive stocks. USDA also said farmers planted more winter wheat last fall than they have for four years. Soft red winter wheat area increased about 18 percent; white wheat 12 percent; and hard red winter wheat 10 percent. Winter wheat usually accounts for about three-fourths of the total U.S. wheat production. Source: Wheat Outlook and Situation Summary. Contact: Ed Allen (202) 786-1840.

DROUGHT SITUATION IMPROVES -- There has been a significant improvement in the Nation's drought situation since last fall. Good signs: Snow pack in the Northern Rockies is normal or near normal so far this winter. Snow cover in the northern Great Plains is good, a decided change from a year ago. Weather patterns have turned around in major sections of the country. Even in Canada. "You don't ever say never in the weather business," says USDA's Chief Meteorologist Norton D. Strommen, "but the odds are strongly against two major U.S. droughts in a row." Contact: Norton Strommen (202) 447-9805.



Mark Vail, president of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters, was in Washington, D.C., the week of Feb. 12 to cover the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Annual Conference for Kansas Ag. Net., Topeka, Kans. Mark also took time out of his busy schedule to stop by USDA and share a laugh or two with Chief of USDA's Radio & TV Division Vic Powell and Deputy Chief Brenda Curtis. (USDA Photo by Larry Rana.)

NATIONAL AG WEEK TV -- NAFB President Mark Vail and Illinois Farm Broadcaster Colleen Callahan will narrate a half-hour magazine style program: "American Farmers: Associating for Success," which will air across the country during National Agriculture Week, March 19-25. The program will focus on the soybean and cotton industries. For a listing of stations and airing times, contact: Walt Dieckamp (317) 276-2522.

CROP QUALITY PROCEEDINGS -- USDA has just released the final report of the conference on Agricultural Products Quality & Competitiveness. USDA held the conference in St. Louis, Mo., June 29 - July 1, 1988. The conference brought agricultural leaders together with representatives of the government and consumer groups for probably the first time to address the issues of quality and competitiveness for food, feed and fiber. For copies, call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

NATURE'S MEDICINE CHEST -- For folk healers and pharmaceutical researchers alike, the whole earth is a medicine chest. Two newly developed strains of fungus yield large amounts of toxins called trichothecens, which are potential cancer fighters. The mutant fungi were developed by: Marian N. Beremand in Peoria, Ill., (309) 685-4011.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1655 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has four new bulletins on incorporating the dietary guidelines into your everyday lifestyle. On this edition, Brenda Curtis talks to the education director for USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service, Susan Welch, about lowering the fat, sugar and salt in your diet. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1644 -- USDA News highlights; crop insurance filing deadline; Ag. Finance Commission report; Crop Insurance Commission; U.S. pork exports up. (Weekly reel of news features)

CONSUMER TIME #1136 -- Oat wars; resources for the future; N-E-A-T; bulletins to help you eat healthier; a new bulletin about the dietary guidelines. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

UPCOMING -- Friday, March 10, World Ag and Grain Production, World Oilseed Situation, World Cotton Situation; Tuesday, March 14, Weekly Weather and Crop Update; Thursday, March 16, Milk Production, Cattle on Feed; Friday, March 17, Ag Outlook.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359. Material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and USDA NEWS SERVICE are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

Thursdays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 7:30-7:45 p.m., EST, Transponder 12D

Saturdays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 10:30-11:15 a.m., EST, ORIGINAL UPLINK Transponder 10D

Mondays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 8:30-9:15 a.m., EST, REPEAT UPLINK Transponder 12D

OFF MIKE

SATELLITE...TV reception has been installed at Mississippi State, according to Tyson Gair, Extension Service. MSU's "Farmweek" statewide TV program has entered its eleventh year. CONGRATULATIONS...to Sherry Newell (WJON-WWJO, St. Cloud, Minn.) for her editorial work on the February edition of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters' "Chats" newsletter. It was her first edition. Great job.

NEW ADDRESS...for NAFB is 26 E. Exchange St., St. Paul, Minn. 55101. (612) 224-0508. Roger Olson, executive director.

DAIRY PRODUCERS...in Wisconsin are confronting lower prices and forage rationing, says Bob Bosold (WAXX, Eau Clair). Herd management is important to justify hay investment in some cows. CONVENTION...in D.C. of Nat'l Rural Electric Coop Association brought several people by the office to say "Hi," including Brian Baxter (Morning Ag Report, Indianapolis, Ind.) and Mike Leport (KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa).

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FIBER...is beneficial for diabetics, says Dr. Mary Sweeten (Texas Ag Experiment Station) (409) 845-1735. She lists good sources of fiber in bread, fruits and vegetables. Studies show improved control of blood glucose levels and reduced insulin requirements when people eat high fiber diets.

USDA...TV Satellite News now has two different feeds per week, Thursday and Saturday. Repeat of all material on Monday.

SECOND CENTURY...is underway for USDA. One hundred years ago this month, USDA entered the president's cabinet. Among big items 100 years ago were the recently discovered fact that animal diseases can be transmitted by pests such as ticks and recommendation to Congress that it pass a meat inspection act.



Vic Powell, Chief, Radio & Television Division